Foundations of College: First Steps to College Success

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First Steps to College Success

**Agenda:**
- **Introductions**
- **College ready skills and how to be prepared**
  - Reading your student’s transcript and GPA calculation
  - Standardized tests of sophomore year
  - What are extracurricular activities and why are they important for college?
- **Know your EA Resources**
- **The Importance of Family Involvement in College Preparation**
- **Suggestions for involvement**
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Desired Scholar Academic Skills and Mindset

- Academic skills and habits
- Habits of mind
- Community and extracurricular involvement

Review the list on the next page and identify a few areas of strength and weakness for your scholar.

Is there one strength that you can celebrate more and one weakness that you can work with them on a plan to address?
Desired Scholar Academic Skills and Mindset

1. My scholar can solve complex problems that have no obvious answer.
2. My scholar can back up his/her opinion with facts.
3. My scholar is open to new ideas and perspectives, even when they challenge his/her own viewpoints.
4. My scholar makes sure that his/her work is precise and accurate.
5. My scholar writes well in his/her academic classes.
6. My scholar has good research skills. (S/he is able to find and use print, digital, human, and other resources to get information for class assignments and other projects.)
7. My scholar manages his/her time well, in and out of class.
8. My scholar is organized in his/her academic work.
9. My scholar persists even when a class or assignment is hard.
10. My scholar uses feedback on his/her work, to improve his/her performance.
11. I have a good sense of my scholar's academic strengths and weaknesses.
12. My scholar studies on a regular basis instead of cramming at the last minute.
13. When speaking, my scholar is able to communicate his/her thoughts and ideas clearly.
14. My scholar goes to classes and meetings well prepared, with all assignments or tasks complete.
15. My scholar responds to emails, texts, phone calls, and mailings right away.
16. My scholar feels comfortable talking with teachers about his/her academic work.
17. My scholar enjoys learning new academic things.
18. My scholar can work and socialize with others who are different from him/her, both inside and outside of class.
19. My scholar is able to manage conflict in a positive way.
20. When frustrated or anxious, my scholar is able to find ways to work through his/her feelings.
21. My scholar has a positive attitude.
22. My scholar makes positive contributions in his/her classes.
23. My scholar is a good role model for others in his/her family, school, and community.
24. My scholar finds ways to give back to his/her community.
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- Transcript review
  - Video on GPA calculation
- FYI: Change to a 10 point grading scale effective this year for **ALL** ABSS students
  - A: 90-100 = 4.0
  - B: 80-89 = 3.0
  - C: 70-79 = 2.0
  - D: 60-69 = 1.0
  - F: < 59 = 0.0

- Change in quality points for honors and Advanced Placement courses:
- Changes in quality points **ONLY** affect current 9th grade students and future high school students. The change for those groups is as follows: honors (.5) and (AP) (1) courses.
- **Quality points of 1 weighted point for honors and 2 weighted points for AP will continue for current 10th, 11th, and 12th graders**
- These quality point changes do not affect the previous or current GPA’s of students (i.e. there will be no GPA recalculations based on these changes)
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• Dr. Atkinson, State Superintendent of NC Public Schools in her April 14th, 2015 letter stated:
  “In addition to the grade scale change, new standards for quality points also take effect in the 2015-16 school year. These new standards are the outcome of a study directed by the NC General Assembly and subsequent actions by the UNC Board of Governors and the State Board of Community Colleges. The new quality point standards only affect ninth graders in the fall of 2015-16 and all students entering high school after that year according to the effective policy date adopted by the State Board of Education. This change does not affect students who will be in grades 10, 11 or 12 in 2015-16.”

• The full letter is on the next page.
April 14, 2015

TO: NC 2015-16 High School Parents

FROM: June St. Clair Atkinson

STATEWIDE 10-POINT GRADING SCALE

For high school students, grades and other academic measures become very important as they plan for their future after graduation. Over the past few years, North Carolina parents, students and local superintendents have petitioned the State Board of Education (SBE) to require a statewide standard 10-point grading scale for all high school students. Those advocating for this change in state policy noted that North Carolina school districts differed in their grading scales and that students would benefit from having a standard 10-point scale. This transition to a 10-point scale helps students who move from one district to another and puts North Carolina students in a more competitive position as they apply for admission to out-of-state colleges and universities.

In October 2014, the State Board approved a standard 10-point grading scale to begin with the 2015-16 school year for all high school students. This scale will not include “pluses” or “minuses.” Grades from prior years will not be altered retroactively.

Grades and Grade-Point Average Calculations

Local school districts are required to follow the new scale at the high school level (grades 9-12). Although it is not required at grades K-8, local school districts may use the scale in lower grades if desired. Under the new scale, grades and grade point average calculations will be applied as follows:

A: 90-100 = 4.0
B: 80-89 = 3.0
C: 70-79 = 2.0
D: 60-69 = 1.0
F: < 59 = 0.0

New Quality Point Standards Begin in 2015-16 with Ninth Graders

In addition to the grade scale change, new standards for quality points also take effect in the 2015-16 school year. These new standards are the outcome of a study directed by the NC General Assembly and subsequent actions by the UNC Board of Governors and the State Board of Community Colleges. The new quality point standards only affect ninth graders in the fall of 2015-16 and all students entering high school after that year according to the effective policy date adopted by the State Board of Education. This change does not affect students who will be in grades 10, 11 or 12 in 2015-16.

The new quality points standard will provide an additional .5 quality point to Honors courses and 1.0 quality point to Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, community college courses, or four-year university or college courses taken in high school.

This eliminates discrepancies between AP/IB and community college or college/university courses and quality points and provides the same additional quality point to all college-level coursework.

For example, a student who earns an A in an AP course would receive a weighted 5.0 grade for that particular course. A student who earns an A in an Honors course would receive a weighted 4.5 grade.

Questions

The North Carolina State Board of Education is committed to helping all students graduate high school prepared for success in college and careers. This recent policy change is in line with this goal as it will make grading scales more consistent across the state and will enable North Carolina students to better compete for admission to colleges and universities across the country. If you any have questions about the new statewide standard grading scale and how it affects your student, please contact your high school counselor.

JSA:mw

c: LEA Superintendents
High School Principals
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• Sophomore Year: An opportunity to build the college resume
  ▫ Build/focus extracurricular activities (List by school available and updated as of 2014-2015 school year. Please encourage scholar to check at school for the most current information.)

  ▫ Challenge themselves academically (request challenging courses in their strongest subjects, seek coaching through EA or teacher’s help in areas of struggle/concern, adjust study or test prep habits)

  ▫ Standardized Tests of Sophomore year
    • PSAT (Preliminary SAT) (www.collegeboard.org) 10/14/15
    • PLAN (ACT) (www.actstudent.org) 10/21/15
    • Will give your scholar an idea of their performance on the SAT and ACT
    • PSAT can be taken again Junior Year (and we recommend this) to qualify for National Merit Scholarship (awarded based on score) and it serves as extra practice
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- **Standardized Test Preparation**
  - We offer test prep for the SAT (on-site, after Saturday programs using free Khan Academy website).
  - Can also provide individual SAT coach to strengthen skills
  - SAT prep typically begins spring of the sophomore year or early in the junior year
  - Scholars are required to report PSAT and Plan scores to staff (CAT Mentor and Mr. Pickett)

***Did your scholar ever receive test accommodations, have an IEP, or other classroom interventions/assistance? Please let us know if they have.
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• What are extracurriculars?
  ▫ Check out what is offered at your student’s school
  • Anything your child is involved in that is not a high school course or paid employment
  • Goes beyond school-sponsored groups such as band, Art Club, or basketball
    • Community service
    • Volunteer Work
    • Family Activities
    • Hobbies
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Examples of Extracurriculars:

- **Arts:** theater, music, dance, painting, photography
- **Church Activity:** community outreach, helping the elderly, event planning, community suppers, bible school, Sunday School, offering, planning and helping with festivals
- **Clubs:** Key Club, Art Club, Spanish Club, Quiz Bowl
- **Community Activity:** community theatre, event organizing, participation in festivals
- **Governance:** student government, school committees
- **Hobbies:** collecting, model railroads, blogging, knitting
- **Media:** web work, school newspaper, yearbook staff
- **Military:** drill teams, ROTC
- **Music:** solo efforts, school and/or church related
- **Sports:** school, church, bowling leagues, dance, etc.
- **Family Activities:** travel, bowling leagues, rock-climbing
- **Volunteer Work and Community Service**
- **Employment**
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• Why extracurriculars make a difference:
  ▫ Students develop valuable skills
  ▫ They help students to stand apart in the sea of applications
  ▫ Allow admissions offices to see the student behind the paperwork
  ▫ The high school and college versions of your scholar are not *that* different
    • Colleges will assume that what your scholar brings to their high school, they will also bring to their college
It doesn’t matter if they have the skills and experience if they don’t sell it!!!
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• Final words on extracurriculars:
  ▫ Follow Passions and Interests
    • If there is not a club that interests your child…start a new club
  ▫ Encourage Balance (more than 1 activity or genre)
  ▫ Encourage Depth (longevity > quantity)
  ▫ Encourage Intentional Selection of Activities
  ▫ Encourage Pursuit of Leadership
    • Leadership doesn’t just mean holding an office. Mention any and all leadership roles.
  ▫ Talk with your scholar about how to frame their extracurricular involvement
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• Know Your EA Resources
  ▫ CAT Mentors (College Access Team)
    • They are hired, trained, and supervised by the Assistant Director of Scholar Support (Mr. John Pickett)
    • They are the front lines of support, information, and guidance for scholars
    • Meet three times each semester (should have already met 1 time)
    • It helps if your scholar comes prepared with questions or goals for each meeting
  ▫ Academic Coaches
    • Don’t wait to request!
    • To make best use of the coach, your scholar should bring materials from class, tests, homework, etc. and/or submit materials ahead of time
    • Coaches often will answer questions between meetings
  ▫ Phoenix Card Privileges
    • Cultural events, sporting events, fitness center, library, writing center (schedule to come in October)
    • Reminder of safety and open campus
  ▫ www.elon.edu/elonacademy
    • Provides links to other resources, including those in the community (basic needs, mental health, etc.), for college planning, and latest EA news
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(Ok, so what do I have to do with this?)

• “Parent involvement at home and at school has been associated with higher rates of student achievement, attendance, homework completion, graduation and college enrollment.” (Preparing for College: Nine Elements of Effective Outreach, pg. 35)

• Students whose parents participated in college preparation activities are more likely to enroll in college, according to the NCES. (National Center for Education Statistics).

• First generation college students were also more likely to report desiring more parental involvement. (Higher Education Research Institute, 2007)
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• How Can I Be Involved?
  ▫ Sign up on websites for information that keeps you up to date about what your scholar should be doing or may be experiencing at this stage
    • CFNC.org (Everything related to planning, applying, and paying for college; North Carolina schools)
    • Ecampustours.com (planning, paying for, other topics of interest)
    • Knowhow2go.org (geared toward students, but gives you an idea of information they are getting)
    • CollegeBoard.com (SAT information and registration)
    • Actstudent.org (ACT information and practice!)
    • Get to know their CAT mentor and school counselor
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• What Else Can I Do?
  ▫ Use your resources to introduce them to people in their fields/areas of interest
  ▫ Build on their strengths (and encourage them to do the same)
  ▫ Encourage their involvement and leadership activities in areas in which they are passionate.
  ▫ Encourage them to keep track of what they are doing for applications later
  ▫ Begin talking to them about their classes for next year. Help them assess honestly how they are doing in a certain subject and in a particular level of a subject
• Begin to allow them to address challenges first, with parent intervention second
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Your input and involvement does make a difference!

“Aspects of parent influence most strongly correlated with achievement include parents’ aspirations and expectations for their children.” (Preparing for College: Nine Elements of Effective Outreach)